

From The New Yorker.

PSALM XCIII.—3.

The floods lift up their voice!

Deep from all old Ocean's caves

Breaks the thunder of the waves—

Hark! how they rejoice!

Low 'mong Ocean's vales creeping,

High into the heavens leaping;

Now they mirror forth the skies,

Now they shed the rainbow's dyes;

Bearing, bounding, laughing, glancing,

Foaming, curling, marching, dancing;

Still they lift their voice on high,

Still they thunder to the sky;

And for ever is the theme,

The glory of the Great Supreme.

Their voice in joy doth burst:

The song which thrills their caverns rang,

When the young stars of morning sang—

They heard it at the first;

And though that tune was changed to woe—

By dark rebellion long ago,

Its first tones faintly echo now.

As when, among a thousand strings,

Which breathe in harmony each tone,

One only jars, and wildly rings

Forth on the air notes all its own;

Yet notes so sweet, they seem to be—

Tones of some long lost minstrelsy:

Such notes of joy do rise

From Ocean to the skies.

The dark floods speak in wrath!

Down on their face the thunders spring,

And o'er them with its scorching wing

The lightning makes his path.

The strong winds leap upon the deep,

The wild tornadoes madly sweep,

And the proud billows heed the nod,

To do the vengeance work of God.

Far down upon their floor of stone

The fragments of their wrath lie strown,

While over, o'er their peaceful sleep,

The roaring, churning waters sweep,

And wrathfully deep calls to deep.

The waters speak in love;

While on their breast the winds lie riding.

Paint, is the breath of dying;

How wondrous they move!

So sweet and quiet is their rest,

The stars are pillow'd in their breast;

The ship across their surface flies,

Bearring unnumbered destinies;

And fins of speckled monsters shine,

Glimming through the laughing brine;

Many a bird, like some sea blossom,

Skins in quiet o'er its bosom;

All is peaceful, gentle motion,

Boundless, glorious, sleeping Ocean!

To Man thou givest stores of wealth;

To him thy breath gives joy and health.

Ah yes, in love!

The voice doth move!

And yet, when tempests make their path

Across thy face, thou hast a voice for wrath;

But still, whate'er thy tides may be,

They ever thunder forth, Great God! the praise of Thee!

Peconic, Ill., April, 1841. J. A. W.

From the last "Book."

MAN THE REFORMER.

A LECTURE, BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

I wish to offer to your consideration some thoughts on the particular and general relations of Man as a reformer. I shall assume that the aim of each young man in this association is the very highest that belongs to a rational mind. Let it be granted, that our life, as we lead it, is common and mean; that some of these offices and functions for which we were mainly created are grown so rare in society, that the memory of them is only kept alive in old books and in dim traditions; that prophets and poets, that beautiful and perfect men, we are not now, nor have we even seen such, that some sources of human instruction are almost unknown and unknown among us; that the community in which we live will hardly bear to be told that every man should be open to ecstasy or a divine illumination, and his daily walk elevated by intercourse with the spiritual world. Grant all this, as we must, yet I suppose none of my auditors—a honest and intelligent soul will deny that we ought to seek to establish ourselves in such disciplines and courses as will deserve that guidance and clearer communication with the spiritual nature. And further, I will not dissemble my hope, that each person whom I address has felt his own call to cast aside all evil customs, tumults, and limitations, and to be in his place a free and helpful man, a reformer, a benefactor, so content to slip along through the world like a fountain or a spring, escaping by his ambiences and analogies as many shocks as he can, but a brave and upright man, who must find or cut a straight road to everything excellent in the earth, and not only go honorably himself, but make it easier for all who follow him, to go in honor, and with benefit.

In the history of the world, the doctrine of Reform had never such scope as at the present hour. Lutherans, Huguenots, Jesuits, Monks, Quakers, Knox, Wesley, Swedenborg, Bentham, in their associations of society, all respected something—church or state, literature or history, domestic usages, the market town, the diet or table, coined money. But now all these and all things else, hear the trumpet and must rush to judgement—Christianity, the laws, commerce, schools, the farm, the laboratory; and not a kingdom, town, state, tribe, calling, man, or woman, but is threatened by the new spirit.

What if some of the objections and objections whereby our institutions are assailed are extreme and speculative, and the reformers tend to idealism; that only shows the extravagances of the abuses which have driven the mind into the opposite extreme. It is when facts and persons grow unreal and fantastic by too much idealism, that the scholars flee to the world of ideas, and aims to recruit and replenish nature from that source. Let us establish their legitimate sway again in society, let life be fair and poetic, and the scholars will gladly be lovers, citizens, and philanthropists.

It will afford no security from the new ideas, that the old nations, the laws, & centuries, the property and institutions of a hundred cities, are all built on other foundations. The demon of reform has a secret door into the heart of every lawmaker, of every inhabitant of every city. The fact, that a new thought and hope have dawned in your breast, should apprise you that in the same hour a new light broke in upon a thousand private hearts. That secret which you would fain keep—as soon as you go abroad, let there be one standing on the door-step, to tell you the same. There is not the most bronzed and sharpened money-changer, who does not, to your consternation, almost, quail and shake the moment he hears a question prompted by the new ideas. We thought he had some semblance of ground to stand upon, that such as he at least would die hard, but he trembles and does. Then the scholars say: "Caves and coulants shall never impede us; we are again; tor, bound every sojourn dream of mine is rousing to fulfilment. That fancy I had, and hesitated to utter, because you would laugh, the broken, the attorney, the merchantman are saying the same thing. Had I waited a day longer to speak, I had been too late. Behold, State-street, and Wall-street begin to prophesy!"

It cannot be wondered, at this general impact into abuses, that arise in the bosom of society, when one considers the practical impediments that stand in the way of various young men. The young man on entering life finds the ways to lucrative employments blocked up by abuses. The ways of trade grow softish to the borders of theft, and up to the borders (not beyond the borders) of fraud. The evanagements of commerce are not intrinsically unfair to a man, less so than to his faculties; but these are now in their general course so vitiated by deceptions and abuses, that can be expected of every man, to right himself in them. He is lost in them; he cannot move hand or foot in them. Has he genius and virtue, the less he can find them fit for him to grow in; and if he would thrive in them, he must sacrifice all the brilliant dreams of boyhood and youth as dreams. He must forgo the prayers of his child-

hood; and he must take on him the harness of routine and obsequiousness. If not so minded, nothing is left him but to begin the world anew, as he does to put the spade into the ground for food. We are all implicated, of course, in this charge; it is only necessary to ask a few questions as to the progress of the articles of commerce from the fields where they grew, to our houses, to become aware that we eat and drink and wear perjury and fraud in a hundred commodities. How many articles of daily consumption are furnished us from the West Indies; yet it is said, that, in the Spanish islands, the voluntary of the officers of the government has passed into usage, and that no article passes into our ships, which has not been fraudulently cheapened. In the Spanish Islands, every agent or factor of the Americans, unless he be a consul, has taken oath that he is a Catholic, or has caused a priest to make that declaration for him. The abolitionist has shown us our dreadful debt to the southern negro. In the island of Cuba, in addition to the ordinary abominations of slavery, it appears, only men are bought for the plantations, and one dies every year, of these miserable batches, to yield us sugar. I leave for others who have the knowledge, the part of setting the oaths of our customers: I will not inquire into the oppression of the slaves. Mr. Hammond would make his acknowledgements to the Trade, for their kindness and piety since living in New York, and will always give their work preference in making Duplex work, but will not be able to make any discount from the retail price.

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